

SELF-RAISED

BY
EMMA D. M. SOUTHWORTH

This was one of the bright days of Ishmael's life. Nowhere did he feel so much at home or so happy as with these kind friends. They had an early seaside dinner—fish, crabs, oysters and waterfowl, forming a large portion of the bill of fare. Luscious, freshly gathered fruits composed the dessert. After dinner as the evening was clear and bright, the wind fresh and the water calm, they went for a sail down to Silver Sands, and returned by starlight. Ishmael remained all the week at the Beacon. And it was a week of rare enjoyment to him. He passed nearly all the time with Bee and her inseparable companions, the children. He helped them with the lessons in the school room in the morning; he went nutting with them in the woods, or strolled with them on the beach; and he gave himself up to amusing them during the hour after the lamp was lighted that they were allowed to sit up.

All this was partly due to his desire to be with his betrothed, and partly to his genial love for children. About the middle of the week, as they were all seated at breakfast one morning, missives came from Tanglewood to the Beacon—invitations to dine there the following Wednesday evening. These invitations included Mr. and Mrs. Middleton, Beatrice, and Ishmael.

"You will go of course, Worth?" said Mr. Middleton.

"I am due at Brudenell hall on Tuesday evening, and I must keep my appointment," said Ishmael.

"Well, I suppose that settles it, for I never knew you to break an appointment, under any sort of temptation," said Mr. Middleton.

And Bee, who well understood why, even had Ishmael's time been at his own disposal, he should not have gone to Tanglewood, quietly acquiesced.

On this day Ishmael sought an interview with Mr. and Mrs. Middleton and besought them, as his present income and future prospects equally justified him in taking a wife, to fix some day, not very distant, for his marriage with Bee.

But the father and mother assured him, in the firmest though the most affectionate manner, that at least one, if not two, years must elapse before they could consent to part with their daughter.

Ishmael most earnestly deprecated the two years of probation, and finally compromised with one year, during which he should be permitted to correspond freely with his betrothed, and visit her at will.

With this Ishmael rested satisfied. The remainder of the week passed delightfully to him.

Mrs. Middleton took the children off Bee's hands for a few days, to leave her to some enjoyment of her lover's visit.

And every morning and afternoon Ishmael and Bee rode or walked together, through the old forest, or along the pebbly beach. Sometimes they had a sail to some fine point on the shore. There evenings were passed in the drawing room, with Mr. and Mrs. Middleton, and were employed in music, books and conversation.

And so the pleasant days slipped by and brought the Sabbath, when all the family went together to the old Shelton church.

Monday was the last day of his visit and he passed it almost exclusively in the society of Bee. In the evening Mr. and Mrs. Middleton left them alone in the drawing room, that they might say their last kind words to each other unembarrassed by the presence of others.

And on Tuesday morning Ishmael mounted his horse and started for Brudenell.

CHAPTER X.
ISHMAEL AT BRUDENELL.
God loves no heart to others lead,
Nor erring flatteries which bedim
Our glorious membership in Christ,
Wherein all loving His, love Him.

It was a long day's ride from the Beacon to Brudenell hall. The greater length of the road lay through the forest. It was, in fact, the very same route traversed five years before by Reuben Gray, when he brought Hannah and Isabel from the Hill Sut to Woodside.

Ishmael thought of that time, as he ambled on through the leafy wilderness.

At noon he stopped at a rural inn to feed and rest his horse, and refresh himself, and an hour afterward he mounted and resumed his journey.

It was near sunset when he came in sight of the bay and the village to which it gave the name of Baymouth. How well he remembered the last time he had been at the village—when he had run that frantic race to catch the sleigh that was carrying Claudia away from him, and had fallen in a swoon at the sight of the steamer that was bearing her off.

How many changes had taken place since then. Claudia was a viscountess; he was a successful barrister; their love was a troubled dream of the past.

He rode through Baymouth, looking right and left at the old familiar shops and signs that had been the wonder and amusement of his childhood; and at many new shops and signs that the march of progress had brought down even to Baymouth.

He paused a moment to look at Hamlin's book store, that had been the paradise of his boyhood; and he recalled that noteworthy day in August when, standing before Hamlin's window, staring at the books, he had first been accosted by Mr. Middleton, afterwards assaulted by Alfred Burgho, and finally defended by Claudia Merlin. Claudia was noble then, but ah, how ignoble now.

Hiding through their town and taking the road to Brudenell.
Every foot of the road was rich in memories to Ishmael. Over it he had ridden, in Mr. Middleton's carriage, on the fateful day of his first meeting with Claudia.
Over it he had travelled, weary and footsore, through the snow, to sell his precious book to buy tea for Hannah.
And over it he had again flashed in Mr. Middleton's sleigh, happy in the possession of his recovered treasure.

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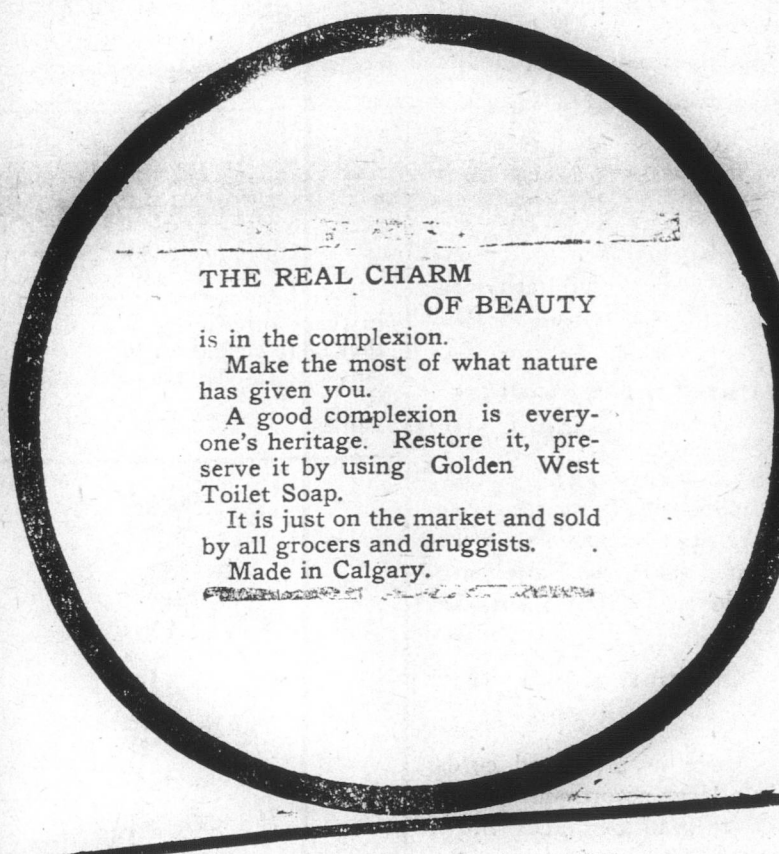
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